



THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST SENATE COALITION

GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE

March 14, 2008

The Honorable Byron Dorgan
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy & Water, and Related
Agencies
133 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Pete V. Domenici
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy & Water, and Related
Agencies
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member:

As members of the Great Lakes delegation, we are writing to express our strong support for funding for an important Army Corps of Engineers' project. The Great Lakes provide drinking water to millions of Americans, are a source of recreation, and provide for maritime commerce, and we want to protect the Great Lakes.

- **We request that the Committee provide \$4.0 million for technical assistance to Remedial Action Plans (RAP) Committees (Section 401a, WRDA 1990 as amended).**

Through the 1987 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, the United States and Canada agreed to develop remedial action plans (RAPs) for each of the 43 internationally recognized areas of concern (26 U.S. sites and 5 shared U.S. and Canadian sites). RAPs embody a comprehensive ecosystem approach to restoring and protecting beneficial uses and to identifying specific actions to resolve pollution problems. This program authorizes the Corps of Engineers to provide technical support to states and local organizations in the development and implementation of RAPs. The Corps' expertise in dredging and sediment management is valuable for the planning and designing of contaminated sediment cleanups. State and local agencies from 30 RAPs in Ohio (Ashtabula, Maumee, Black, and Cuyahoga Rivers), Illinois (Waukegon Harbor), New York (Buffalo River, Eighteen Mile Creek, Niagara River, Rochester Embayment and St. Lawrence River), Michigan (Deer Lake, Torch Lake, Muskegon Lake and White Lake; River Raisin, Rouge, Saginaw, St. Marys, Kalamazoo, Manistique, St. Clair, Detroit, and Clinton Rivers), Wisconsin (Milwaukee Bay, Menominee, Sheboygan, and Fox Rivers), Minnesota (St. Louis River), Pennsylvania (Presque Isle Bay), and Indiana (Grand Calumet River) have requested funding. This program received \$430,000 in FY-08, and the proposed FY-09 budget did not provide funding.

- **We urge the Committee to provide \$6.75 million for the construction and operation of the electric dispersal barriers in the Chicago Sanitary & Ship Canal (Section 3061, WRDA 2007).**

Historically, the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River were separated naturally by a landmass, but since the completion of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, aquatic species can move freely between the two water systems. A temporary dispersal barrier (Barrier I) has been operating for nearly six years, and construction of a permanent barrier (Barrier II) will be completed this year. We urge the Committee to provide \$6.75 million for the operations of both barriers and begin construction of the conversion of Barrier I into a permanent barrier as well as a feasibility study. In FY-08, this project received \$9.1 million, and the President's budget recommends \$6.25 million.

- We request that the Committee provide \$4.5 million for construction of restoration projects under the Great Lakes Fishery & Ecosystem Restoration program (Section 506, WRDA 2000).

The Great Lakes sustain a nationally and internationally significant fishery that has been degraded by habitat losses, contamination, and invasive species. Under this program, the Corps will coordinate with other Federal, State, and local agencies and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission to plan, implement, and evaluate projects supporting the restoration of the fishery, ecosystem, and beneficial uses of the Great Lakes. This program is an important component of the Great Lakes Strategy developed by the U.S. Policy Committee in 2000 and the 2005 Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy. In FY-08, this program received \$940,000. The proposed FY-09 budget did not provide funding for this program.

We appreciate your consideration of these requests, and if you have any questions, please contact Joy Mulinex at 224-1211.

Sincerely,



George V. Voinovich



Carl Levin



Richard J. Durbin



Debbie Stabenow



Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Herb Kohl



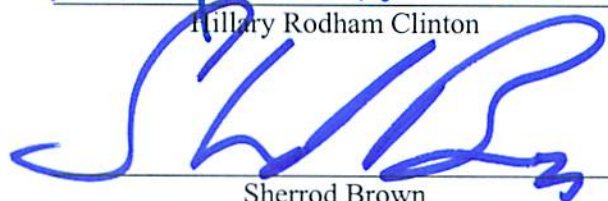
Richard G. Lugar



Hillary Rodham Clinton



Charles E. Schumer



Sherrod Brown